AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

Claim 14 (Previously presented) An oxygen-free plasma etching gas formulation for removing an organic ARC on a metallic layer comprising CHF_3, argon and HCl or BCl_3, the gas formulation being free of SF_6.

Claims 15-17 (Canceled)

Claim 18 (Previously presented) An oxygen-free plasma etching gas formulation for removing an organic ARC on a metallic layer comprising CHF_3, argon and chlorine, the gas formulation being free of SF_6, and a ratio of flow rates of CHF_3:argon:chlorine in the formulation is 5 to 80 sccm:5 to 80 sccm:5 to 60 sccm.

Claims 19-20 (Canceled)

Claim 21 (Currently amended) An oxygen-free plasma etching gas formulation for removing an organic ARC on a metallic layer comprising (i) more than one fluorine-containing compound, (ii) an ~~optional~~ inert carrier gas selected from the group consisting of krypton, argon, neon, helium, and mixtures thereof, and (iii) chlorine, the gas formulation being free of SF_6.

Claims 22-27 (Canceled)

Claim 28 (Previously presented) The gas formulation of Claim 14, which comprises HCl.

Claim 29 (Previously presented) The gas formulation of Claim 14, which comprises BCl_3.

Claim 30 (Currently amended) The gas formulation of Claim 21, ~~which comprises an inert carrier gas~~ wherein the inert carrier gas is krypton.

Claim 31 (New) The gas formulation of Claim 21, wherein the inert carrier gas is argon.

Claim 32 (New) The gas formulation of Claim 21, wherein the inert carrier gas is neon.

Claim 33 (New) The gas formulation of Claim 21, wherein the inert carrier gas is helium.

Claim 34 (New) The gas formulation of Claim 14, which consists essentially of CHF_3, argon, and HCl or BCl_3.

Claim 35 (New) The gas formulation of Claim 18, which consists essentially of CHF_3, argon, and chlorine.